

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA
OFFICE OF PROCUREMENT MANAGEMENT
523 EAST CAPITOL AVENUE
PIERRE, SOUTH DAKOTA 57501-3182

**Career Connector Community Engagement and Supplemental
Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training
Services**

Questions and Responses Final

PROPOSALS ARE DUE NO LATER THAN NOVEMBER 4, 2020 5:00PM CST

RFP # 2148

BUYER: Division of
Economic Assistance

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Please note that questions 1 through 6 had been answered previously.

1. If a vendor offers both Career Connector and SNAP services, can clients from these two programs be mixed when receiving group services such as employment classes?

Yes, recipients of each service type may attend training opportunities together. Confidentiality remains a requirement as not to have participant identify their "reason for participation" (IE SNAP, Medicaid, etc.). It is probable that each recipient group will have similar service needs, but also unique program requirements.

2. Does the state intend to maintain a voluntary Career Connector program if the federal waiver is approved? Or will all Career Connector clients be mandated to participate once the waiver is obtained?

Upon receiving federal approval for the Career Connector program, all voluntary participants will become mandatory participants.

3. Does DSS have an estimate on when the federal waiver will be approved?

DSS continues to work with CMS on completing the approval. A timeline has not been established for completion. The state will have a 90 day ramp up period after approval to prepare for the mandatory program.

4. The RFP provides data on the anticipated client numbers for the Career Connector and SNAP programs. Can DSS provide an estimation of how much overlap there is between the two groups? In other words, can you estimate how many anticipated clients belong to both groups?

There should be no cross participation. Customers required to participate in the SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) program are exempt from participation in the Career Connector program. There may be times when a customer meets an exemption for the E&T program and then moves to the Career Connector program.

5. Attachment C indicates an expectation for tracking client outcomes for 12 months after they complete program services. Does DSS expect that the contractor will do all of that tracking? If so, will DSS assist with client contact information such as change of address, phone, name, etc.? Will the contractor be judged on this longitudinal data even if long-term contact with clients cannot be maintained?

No, the selected vendor is not required to track outcomes 12 months after completion of program services. The outcomes mentioned in Attachment C are available through a database maintained by the Department of Social Services. However, in the event the vendor would want to track these individuals beyond the measures in attachment C, DSS would be willing to share all available information to assist in this effort. Additionally, although the vendor is not required to maintain contact with customers, the vendor may have their performance assessed based on their performance in reporting measures outlined in Attachment C.

6. On page 9, Section 3.3, Program Reporting, it says that the contractor must "...track and maintain the number of ABAWD months used over a 36-month period. ABAWDs are limited to 3 months of SNAP eligibility in a 36-month period, unless they are meeting the ABAWD work requirement. Therefore, this tracking capability is essential to program operation." Does this mean that the contractor is expected to track clients' SNAP usage for 36 months, even if they are not currently enrolled in services? Would this not simply duplicate DSS's own records? Or does it mean that the contractor must ensure that clients are eligible for SNAP services when they are enrolled in the program? Would this not be a more appropriately a DSS responsibility, since DSS already has this data? Will DSS regularly provide the contractor with SNAP usage data, or must the contractor attempt to collect this data directly from clients?

The tracking and maintenance of the ABAWD time limit capability ultimately rests on with the selected vendor. Currently, the DSS system does provide for the tracking of this data, however, at the time of the release and due to a variety of technological factors it is not a certainty that the DSS system will be able to be leveraged with the selected vendor. Therefore, in the event the DSS system is unable to be utilized for this purpose, the vendor should have the ability to track the ABAWD time limit and meet all other reporting requirements.

7. It is stated on page 6 of 27, Pennington County has 1,189 SNAP E&T recipients and 569 Career Connector participants.

- a. Are any of these individuals duplicated between the two programs?

There is no duplication. Customers required to participate in SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) are exempt from participation in the Career Connector program. There may be times when a customer meets an exemption for the E&T program and then moves to the Career Connector program.

- b. If so, how many are duplicated?

None.

8. On page 6 of 27 of the RFP, 3.1.1, it states DSS will verify if an individual is required to participate in the program. If the 1115 Demonstration Proposal for the Career Connector program is still pending at the time of the award OR not approved, will the 569 Career Connector participants be referred to this program and expected to participate even though it is on a voluntary basis?

DSS is seeking a vendor to assist with the voluntary program, the Career Connector program will continue on a voluntary basis.

9. What would you anticipate an average case load would be for each case manager for this project given the intensity of services required?

The average caseload for a given case manager is best determined by the agency providing services. The caseload should allow staff to effectively meet the needs of their customers, to include having time to develop an approach to address barriers the customers they are serving may be facing. Case managers are expected to assist the participant in meeting the expectations of the program, while too guiding them towards the goals and objectives they have established for themselves.

10. What is the expected average length of time for each contact with a participant?

Customers should be engaged as long as is required, enabling them to successfully meet the requirements of the program, leading to eventual success. The customers served by these programs face

multiple barriers and household circumstances are unique across the entire population. Therefore, it should be the expectation to provide efficient and effective service, successfully meeting the customers' needs, and setting them up for the best possibility of success.

For Career Connector it could be as short as 1 month or continue for over a year. Many recipients close from coverage in less than 1 year.

11. Currently, it is our understanding that South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) is providing employment services to referrals from the SNAP E&T Program.

Will DLR continue to provide employment services to the SNAP E&T and/or the Career Connector participants?

The Department of Labor and Regulation will continue to be a job service resource. That said, they will not provide service in the same way they did when the agency was providing contracted service to SNAP E&T. It should be noted that all SNAP E&T participants will continue to have access to the wide range of services available at DLR to the same degree as any other South Dakotan coming to their office for employment related services. There will be no contractual services provided by DLR for the Career Connector program. However, we encourage the vendor to consider utilizing services available through DLR.

12. On page 5 of 27, under 3.0 SCOPE OF WORK, it states "The State is publishing the RFP to secure *intensive case management services* for the customers required to participate in the South Dakota Career Connector and SNAP E&T program to maintain eligibility for South Dakota SNAP and Medicaid." The RFP further describes the initial assessment under 3.1.2 and the requirements of the individualized employment and training plans.

Is it expected that a Case Manager for this program would be responsible for all these duties? Or would some of these services be provided in partnership with other agencies such as the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation?

It is expected that the Case Manager would be responsible for assisting the customer in receiving these services. Partnerships with outside agencies is anticipated. However, the responsibility lies with the Case Manager to ensure the customer is meeting participation requirements and has access to appropriate services if not available through the case manager.

13. For individuals referred to the program from DSS, would the DSS Intake Information be accessible to the case managers at the time of referral?

The intent is to provide the selected vendor with access to the DSS system. This would then allow the case manager to access the intake information. However, if there are complications with system access or this is not feasible, case information would eventually be available to the case manager. Although, there could be an experienced delay, simply due to system limitations.

14. Is the expectation that a successful grant applicant will be required to develop (or contract with a company to develop) a Management Information System (MIS) to track all required data or is there an existing MIS that will be utilized?

If there is an existing system, will the successful grant applicant have access to that system to enter data or will they provide the data to DSS to be entered?

Similar to question 5, DSS does intend to provide access to the DSS system. In this situation, the selected vendor would have access to a limited area and would be able to enter data in specific locations within the system. Should something arise preventing this from being possible, then an alternative approach will need to be discussed.

15. Please provide anticipated the funding allocations related to this RFP by program and county.

The SNAP E&T funding allocation varies year to year and a variety of factors go into the formula to determine the yearly State allocation. Therefore, we are unable to provide an exact allocation figure. That said, the State does receive federal funding through a number of sources in the way of 100% and 50/50 funding to administer the SNAP E&T program in South Dakota. There is additional funding, such as Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) Pledge funding available to states but does require certain requirements to be met in order to be eligible to receive that funding.

16. Please provide anticipated funding allocations for participant supportive services.

In relation to Career Connector, there is no allocation for supportive services.

Funding is available and will be allocated for supportive services, however, the supportive service funding allocation will be discussed with the selected vendor(s).

17. Is the applicant responsible for participant supportive services? If so, please provide a breakdown of annual spend by category for the following: work clothing and tools, childcare, transportation, and career/technical education programming. If so, are there any maximums per client for any of the aforementioned categories?

As noted above, the SNAP E&T program does have funding available to allocate towards supportive services for participants involved in the SNAP E&T program.

18. Who is the current service provider and what are their current allocations?

The South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation is the current provider for both the Career Connector and Employment & Training programs.

The South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation is the current service provider for the SNAP E&T program.

19. What is the current average caseload ratio?

There is no established caseload ratio for the Career Connector program.

There is no established caseload ration for the SNAP E&T program. Caseloads should allow for case managers to effectively address barriers and meet the needs of the SNAP E&T program participants.

20. RFP page 5, are the anticipated program participant counts described in the RFP the anticipated enrollments for the programs for the year, steady state caseload or anticipated referrals to the programs? If the caseload, will the vendor receive all of the cases all at once?

For the Career Connector program, weekly referrals will be provided to the vendor. Referrals are completed when new cases are approved or reviewed.

For the SNAP E&T program, the figures provided on page 5 of the RFP were averages based on SFY 2020 information.

21. RFP page 5, please clarify if the anticipated program participant counts included in the RFP are unique individuals served. Or are the estimates for Medicaid work requirements included in the SNAP participant counts? Put another way, are cases duplicative in the Medicaid work requirement and SNAP programs?

There are no duplicative recipients between the programs. At times a customer may fluctuate between the programs but will not be subjected to cooperation with both programs simultaneously.

22. We observed that this RFP was also released in the spring of 2020. Was that RFP awarded?

The Career Connector RFP release in Spring 2020 was withdrawn and re-released in partnership with SNAP Employment & Training services.

23. Should location and related expenses be included in our cost proposal?

Yes, all anticipated expenses should be included in the proposal.

24. What is the expected period of performance? For example, the contract on page 14 of the RFP: Attachment A states June 1, 2020-May 31, 2021, is this correct?

These dates were part of the standard template and do not reflect the actual initial contract period. The period for the contract will be set after the award.

25. When did this program begin in South Dakota?

The Career Connector program began as a voluntary program on July 1, 2018.

A SNAP E&T program has been operating in the State since 1987.

26. Are there plans to fund this program beyond demonstration?

Our intentions are to continue the program beyond the demonstration time period.

27. How will the Department of Social Services, Division of Economic Assistance measure the success of the program?

The programs will measure success based a number of State and Federal requirements/expectations. More specifically, the State will leverage the metrics from the FNS 583 and FNS SNAP E&T Annual Reporting, as well as other established outcomes measures related to employment, retention, goal attainment, credential attainment, and success overtime. Further specifics, related to performance, will be discussed with the awarded vendor.

28. Please advise if there are any limitations on administrative costs in proposed budgets.

Vendors should submit proposals which they expect would allow them to effectively meet the needs of the SNAP E&T program participants. With this in mind, it is the expectation that services are tailored to meet the specific needs of the participants while also remaining within the scope of the delivered services.

29. Please advise if there are any limitations on profit in proposed budgets.

Please provide further details surrounding profit as it relates to the scope of work with the RFP.